

Message Text

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PASS TO OED/MEPD AND OIM

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: BENC, VE
SUBJECT: MAJOR PROJECT: CARACAS METRO AND PEOPLE MOVER

REF: (A) CARACAS 2352; (B) CARACAS 2307, (C) CARACAS 6094

(1) MINISTER OF TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS VIVAS CASANOVA REPORTED TO PRESS THAT SUBSTANTIAL PORTION ECONOMIC COUNCIL MEETING LAST THURSDAY AT WHICH PRESIDENT PEREZ PRESIDED WAS DEDICATED TO DISCUSSION OF MASS TRANSPORT ALTERNATIVES IN CARACAS AREA. DECISION WAS MADE TO "EXPEDITE STUDIES OF CITY CENTER TO CARICUAO LINE IN ORDER TO START CONSTRUCTION NEXT YEAR." WITH REGARD TO THE CARACAS-LITORAL ENLACE (REFTEL A), HE INDICATED A TEAM OF VENEZUELAN AND FOREIGN CONSULTANTS WOULD REVIEW THE AVAILABLE PRE-PROJECTS INCLUDING A STUDY OF THE FEASIBILITY OF A "TRAIN" CONNECTION BETWEEN THE COAST AND CARACAS.

(2) EMBOFF CONSULTED TODAY WITH DIRECTOR OF METRO PROJECT OFFICE, GONZALEZ LANDER, WHO PROVIDED ADDITIONAL NUANCE. THE STUDIES ALREADY UNDER WAY (REFTEL B) WILL BE ACCELERATED. BECAUSE THE OVERALL PATTERN IS WELL
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PAGE 02 CARACA 06234 211608Z

SETTLED NOW, I.E., STATION DESIGNS, ROUTE ENGINEERING, BIDDING PROCEDURES, HE THOUGHT A 1978 START-UP OF CONSTRUCTION WOULD BE ATTAINABLE. TO EMBOFF'S QUESTION WHETHER AN OPPORTUNITY EXISTS FOR A CONTRIBUTION FROM A U.S ENGINEERING FIRM, GONZALEZ REPLIED THAT HE IS WELL-SATISFIED WITH THE CONSULTANTS HIS OFFICE NOW HAS ON BOARD. (BECHTEL SOON WILL HAVE SIXTY FAMILIES IN

TOW). HE ADDED THAT PERHAPS 100 ADDITIONAL SUBWAY CARS WOULD HAVE TO BE PROCURED, PROBABLY FROM THE WINNER OF THE BID NOW UNDER EVALUATION.

(3) GONZALEZ LANDER WAXED PHILOSOPHICAL REGARDING THE TWO U.S. CONSORTIA'S BIDS. FOR REASONS HE COULD NOT DETERMINE, EACH BID CONTAINED EXTREMELY HIGH-PRICED ELEMENTS WHICH THREW THE ENTIRE BID INTO THE HIGH ZONE. HE THOUGHT PULLMAN-STANDARD AND WESTINGHOUSE EACH HAD PREPARED AN OUTSTANDING BID, IMPLYING THAT THEIR PARTNERS HAD LET THEM DOWN. WHEN ASKED WHETHER THE PROCESS COULD BE REOPENED IN ORDER TO ALLOW A RE-COMBINED BID, HE RESPONDED NEGATIVELY. HE OBSERVED THAT THE JAPANESE AND GERMANS, FOR INSTANCE, HAD MORE EXPERIENCE IN WORKING TOGETHER AND SUBMITTING JOINT BIDS WHEREAS THE AMERICANS WERE UNCOMFORTABLE TOGETHER. PERHAPS BECAUSE OF THE SAN FRANCISCO BART EXPERIENCE, THEY TENDED TO OVER-COMPENSATE FOR THE RISK ELEMENTS.

(4) REGARDING THE PEOPLE-MOVER PROJECT (REFTEL C), GONZALES LANDER EMPHATICALLY STATED THAT THE METRO PROJECT OFFICE WOULD BE EXECUTING AGENCY FOR THE CARICUAO LINE AND THAT THE PEOPLE-MOVER TYPE CARS WOULD NOT BE USED. DELFINO AND COMPANY EXCEEDED THEIR MANDATE IN ATTEMPTING TO GET INTO THIS. THEY ARE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 CARACA 06234 211608Z

PERFECTLY FREE TO BUILD SOMETHING DOWN ON THE COAST, ACCORDING TO GONZALEZ LANDER, BUT HE THOUGHT THEY TENDED TO UNDERESTIMATE THE INFRASTRUCTURE PROBLEMS. THEY WERE FREE TO BUILD A LINE UP TO CARACAS ALSO. PERSONALLY, HE FAILED TO SEE THE LOGIC OF A MASS TRANSIT CONNECTION TO THE COAST WHEN WHAT IS REALLY NEED IS FREIGHT CAPABILITY.

(5) EMBASSY HAS BEEN IN CONTINUOUS CONTACT WITH THE WESTINGHOUSE REP HERE WHO REPORTS INABILITY TO GET INTO DELFINO'S OFFICE FOR LAST TWO WEEKS. EMBOFF LIKEWISE UNABLE TO SEE JESUS ALVAREZ FERNANDEZ WHO HAS CANCELLED TWO APPOINTMENTS. WESTINGHOUSE REP SAYS HIS CONTACTS PUB AMBIGUOUS INTERPRETATION ON MINISTER VIVAS' PRESS STATEMENT AND FEELS THAT A DOOR IS STILL OPEN FOR WESTINGHOUSE. THAT IS, THE FEASIBILITY STUDY FOR THE CARICUAO LINE WILL CONSIDER EQUIPMENT ALTERNATIVES. VAKY

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